

Eckhart Tolle Retreat Talk Titled Living Deeper Level of Consciousness

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 4:21:34)

This is called a lecture, but it's not really a lecture. It's more a little bit like a meditation. Let's see if we can be here as completely as possible in this moment to be fully here, to inhabit this moment fully that is not a normal human state.

The normal human state is to be elsewhere with your attention, future, and as you get older and there's little future left, then you tend to live in the past, but always escaping from now. And to be here more fully, actually it helps to be in the body, to inhabit the now. One aspect of fully inhabiting the now is to fully inhabit the body.

And that simply means as you sit here and to have some of your attention in the inner energy field of body, there is a certain aliveness throughout the body. Very subtle at first. Maybe you can only feel it in your hands to start with.

But they're alive and somehow you can feel, sense that they are alive. That seems very insignificant to the thinking mind because the thinking mind has more important problems to think about. Of course, the problems it thinks about are to do with the future and perhaps the past.

So to be in the body seems insignificant to the thinking mind. And it quickly loses interest in being in the body because the thinking mind always says, okay, okay, you've told us to be in the body, now what's the next thing you're going to tell us? Because the tendency for the thinking mind is always to be with the next thing, not this.

It runs away from this to the next. Hence the enormous psychological need within everybody for the next moment. Where is it?

So as you sit here, feel that connectedness so that you're rooted within. Some attention is here throughout the body or if you can only feel one or two parts, that's good enough. Have some attention there and then there's quite enough attention left to listen in a state of alert presence.

So the body is, I sometimes call it a portal into that state of consciousness that we could call presence of the way forward state. One could also say that the body can act as an anchor for staying present. And then it's, you can simply be here with your attention fully in this moment without even the compulsion, which is so normal, to somehow label and interpret this moment.

You can allow this moment to be as it is. It's a very rare state for human beings. To be so at one with this moment, not against it, not reducing it to a means to an end, not resisting it internally or projecting yourself continuously away from it internally.

And so as you sit here, not even looking for the next thing that the speaker is going to say, it can, there's such fullness to being alive if your attention is here fully. There already is a depth and fullness to life that you miss when you continuously live in past and future. So we are here to experience, and many of you already live that way, if only perhaps part of the time, you're present.

We are here to experience what that means to be fully present and look at the implications of living in such a way. The strange thing that you might notice as you connect with the inner body and allow that state of alert presence to arise in which you perceive without the compulsive need to label mentally that which you are perceiving. And yet you know, this is very strange, you know what it is that you are perceiving, but you no longer know it through the old labels of the mind.

So there is a deeper knowing in you, far deeper than the knowing that is associated with mental conditioning, mental labels, mental noise, concepts, words, sounds. So as you connect with the inner body and allow that alert presence to arise, then you notice the incessant mental noise that is so normal slows down, perhaps even comes to a stop. There's a gap in which you are not thinking and you're fully conscious.

And you know that, you know no longer through the conditioned and acquired mental labels, there is a knowing that happens in the stillness. That is an important aspect of that state of being awake. And suddenly there is a depth to whatever you look upon, a depth and aliveness that wasn't there when you immediately, compulsively, automatically and unconsciously labeled everything and the mind immediately commenting on somehow fitting it into something, some categories, some mental judgments.

And so you simply allow this moment to be. And what arises, one could call that the timeless state of consciousness where you are no longer obsessed with past and future, where you have access to an intelligence that is greater than the conditioned intelligence that is thought, thought activity. And it's an amazing thing.

Most humans don't know that yet, that there is vast intelligence beyond thought, that thought is only a tiny manifestation, a tiny aspect of vastness of intelligence that one could almost say fills the entire space of the universe, that the universe is an alive, intelligent organism. And there is one intelligence that manifests itself as millions of life forms. There are many manifestations of that one intelligence, and one of them is the human mind.

Interesting, but only tiny. And humans equate intelligence with the ability to conceptualize, to store up information, to analyze, which means cut it into pieces. This is what they do at universities increasingly these days.

You become specialist, and the more advanced you become, the more little your pieces are that you examine at university because the mind is going into further and further differentiation and cutting up. And if any of you do PhDs or have PhDs or working on PhDs or have abandoned your PhDs as I did, you know how tiny the area is that you would spend three years or whatever it is working on. So intelligence is to, in our civilization, is the ability to cut information into little pieces and examine it, categorize it, compare it to other bits of information.

And yet, if you look at those humans who were creative in whom something new, totally new insights arose or artistic creations or sudden revolutionary scientific insights, they all report that they came from a realm that was not thought. Thought had also something to do with it. It had to give it form.

But the realization, the creative impulse, many people were asked, well, how do you create? Some didn't even know how they created. They couldn't talk about it.

But then it turned out that in all cases, the creative impulse is preceded by the ability to enter the state of alert presence that is stillness in which thought comes to a halt or becomes relatively insignificant. And there is an alertness that suddenly arises. And that is the influx of the unconditioned consciousness.

Enormous intelligence can then operate, move through you. So every artist, before the creative impulse happens, enters that state, whether they know it or not, it just happens. One could say it is almost a state of listening, such alertness as if you were listening, but there's no strain in it, no tension, just relaxed alertness.

And then the insight comes or action might come out of that state of none. And this is always a state of complete alignment with now. The normal human state is out of alignment with now almost all the time.

In other words, the present moment is reduced at best to a means to an end, because I need to get to the next moment, which is a mental protection. So there's always, one could say, almost a reaching out, a strain of needing to get there. So in the meantime, you have reduced the now, which is all there ever is, to a means to an end.

And unconsciously you believe that the future is more important than now, which means you're out of alignment with now. Or in many cases, there's strong inner resistance or denial of now. You don't want this now to be the way it is, a very normal state.

And so that means there's inner denial or resistance. Again, it is a state of not being aligned with now. And that is a very fundamental dysfunction in human consciousness, to be out of alignment with ultimately what that means, you're out of alignment with life.

And that, what is life? The one life that manifests as many billions of life forms, but there is the one unmanifested life. And you're out of alignment with that.

And you walk on this planet where everything else is in alignment. This is a strange thing. If you look at nature and animals, they exist in that state of the oneness with the totality, and they are in the now.

As Jesus pointed out already, 2000 years ago, he said, look at the flowers. How do they live? And how do you live?

And he said, really, look, the difference between the way in which these flowers exist in a state of alignment with now, I'm paraphrasing the New Testament, in alignment with now, and how observe how you live out of alignment and observe how beautiful, harmonious, and peaceful the flower is. And you can watch an animal. Of course, every life form has certain limitations that are according to the form of that.

But compared to many humans, animals exist in a state of great integrity and peace, one with themselves. Not trying to be something or trying to get somewhere. So this to understand that humans have lived in that time-bound state of consciousness ever since recorded history and beyond.

And how did it all start? And why did that happen? And how is it that human consciousness has become so dysfunctional?

And if you look at human history and different centuries, you can see it almost, it looks as if it were becoming, in the 19th century, everybody believed in progress. It's getting better and better all the time, they said. They also believed that science had already almost solved all problems that we could possibly ask.

And then the 20th century came. And then they realized how little they knew. And they realized how dysfunctional the collective human mind is, the destructiveness that was unleashed upon humanity by humans on other humans on a vast scale through the madness of political movements and ideologies and unbelievable suffering caused by humans to other humans.

If you look at that, and if that is not dysfunctional, what is? And it's been, this has been the worst century of all the 20th in terms of suffering and people killed. And this is a very young century we are in now, a very young millennium.

And already, when you watch TV, it's a continuation of the 20th century. And if nothing changes in human consciousness, we'll have another 20th century, except it'll get worse because science and technology continuously increase the effects of human madness, the tools created by, through intelligence. Yes, it requires great intelligence to manufacture these things.

And very often, intelligence in the service of madness. So there is that basic dysfunction in the human mind. And it is so deep, it's becoming so obvious now that very unlikely that human, the planet would even survive another hundred years of this same

dysfunction.

How could, it's become so destructive. Why is it, how did it all start? And is there a way beyond that?

I am saying there is a way beyond, a new state of consciousness is already arising, but this must not be made into some new belief. It's seeing that a new state of consciousness is already arising within you, while the old state of consciousness, perhaps or probably also is still operating within you. So the old state of consciousness, to call it, this is the dysfunctional state is continuing.

This is what you hear when you watch the news on television. It reports about human madness. But at the same time, the new is arising.

We can only hope that it is arising in sufficiently large numbers of people and quickly enough before the old consciousness self-destructs. So we need also to look at the essence of the dysfunction because if it is a dysfunction in the human mind, it must operate in each human being and it must, should be possible to locate it in oneself rather than saying the evil is all out there. It's not evil.

It's simply a form of unconsciousness. And what is that unconsciousness? At some point in the evolution of humanity, there was the beginning of thought, an incredible evolutionary leap.

The ability to conceptualize, to think, to formulate mental symbols arose. This is probably what the book of Genesis refers to when it speaks of the first humans who ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Well, suddenly the mind was able to differentiate this, this, good, bad.

The knowledge of good and evil, the knowledge of good and bad. A few hundred years ago, Shakespeare wrote in one of his plays, nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. The arising of thought was an enormous thing.

And we cannot say that it was bad. It happened because it had to happen. Whatever happens has to happen.

There is nothing that happens that is not brought about by the totality everything is a web of interconnectedness. So whatever happens cannot be otherwise. This is what humans, most humans don't know because they are against what happens.

This now, this shouldn't be, but it is. Thought arose and very quickly humans became the dominant species because of the enormous power of thought. And over a long period of time, thought began to operate more and more.

And then gradually, human sense of identity of self, of who I am became bound up with

the movement of thought. An image developed in the mind of me. Humans began to have a relationship with themselves.

Nothing on the planet before ever had a relationship with itself, nor to this day. The tree doesn't have a relationship with itself. The cat doesn't have a relationship with itself.

It is itself. And since the cat doesn't have a relationship with itself, its life is, compared to human life, not without challenges, but unproblematic. It doesn't carry the heaviness of a problematic sense of self derived from continuous thought activity.

And so a cat doesn't need therapy because it hasn't split itself into two, me and myself. Because now life is becoming very complex. So humans began to walk around with a self image, a self concept.

It took a long time to develop. Whereas before, life had been so unproblematic and easy. Human life was one of many ways in which the totality expressed itself, as it still does in nature.

And then that was, one could call that the original innocence in humans. The original innocence that is still there in nature. This is why it's so beautiful to go into nature.

It's why it's so beautiful to even watch an animal, even if it kills another animal, it's still innocent. And so humans lost the original innocence that is there when you are yourself. And then a phantom self arose that walked with them wherever they went.

And its main location is in the head, one could say. Me. And so life became increasingly problematic because they lost that rootedness in being that a tree has, a flower has, an animal has.

Without knowing it, it has it. Without knowing it, it knows itself to be one with the one. So it doesn't live in that neurotic state of continuous anxiety and tension.

Just an amazing event on this planet, this arising of self, a mind-made self. And so gradually that sense of being rooted in being, being one with the one life, I don't want to use words like God, they've been misused for too long. Being rooted in being one with that.

And then gradually they lost that. They became disconnected or still were connected but didn't know it anymore. So it's as if they were disconnected from life.

So they became little entities that felt separate from the totality. They had taken themselves out of the web. Then they say me.

They say I. And when they say I, they refer to a conceptualized sense of self in the head. They refer to their name, which is only a thought form.

A thought or a sequence of sounds. John Smith. I.

Who are you? John Smith. That sounds convincing.

But is nothing means completely meaningless. It means nothing. So you have the illusion that already you know who you are.

So and then John Smith is going to tell you if you ask further, well, who are you? Beyond that, he says, well, I am a father of two and an accountant and a graduate of that university. And he may have some longer story to tell.

Divorced twice and this. And so he will give you a little story, which is the story of the self. And there are other aspects to that self which are not always on the surface.

They are certain reactive patterns in the self. There are ways in which that self interprets the universe because it's been conditioned by its culture and its environment in certain ways. It is the content of the mind.

It is the emotions that accompany those mind movements. So two together, the content, the conditioned content of the mind, because everybody gets conditioned by their surrounding culture, the world, personal level, collective world, the country you live in, the culture you're living, the time you live in. The language is itself a strong form of conditioning, your first language, the way it is spoken, what it contains.

It's already a world view. One could say it's already embodied in the language. So at an early age, all that happens.

And gradually as the child, the first, after the child utters his or her name, when she is asked, what is your name? John Smith. Then that is the easily, now other things will cling to that first concept of self, in memories, experiences, knowledge, things that the sense of self gathers around itself to make itself more complete.

And for the rest of his life, John Smith is going to look for things to absorb into his sense of self, to add to his sense of self because his sense of self is not sufficient yet, has not completed itself yet. He doesn't feel that he's really fully himself yet. There is a sense, an underlying sense of lack, of not enough, of insufficiency, of I need some more, something more.

This isn't it. And this is built into the restructure of this mind-made sense of self. It's discontent, lack, fear.

It's always there somewhere. Because ultimately, it is only a mental formation, a conceptualized me in the head. And as such, it can never feel complete.

So it's condemned to seeking to add more to me in whatever form. Hence, the need, the enormous psychological need for future because it's through future that I can find the

more that will complete me, that will make myself complete. And that's a deep-seated collective mind pattern associated with the self, the sense of self that is conceptualized.

Of course, the moment you live in and through a conceptualized sense of self, this is the fate of all humans. They have to go through that. The moment that arises, your entire reality, the world with which you interact becomes a conceptualized reality.

In other words, you see it through the filter of the conditioning of the conceptualized me, the sense of self. So whatever you look upon, interact with, is immediately, according to its conditioning, the conditioned self, interpreted, judged, labeled, according to the conditioning. So that is what humans have in common.

No matter what nation, what culture they belong to, although in the more advanced countries, the dysfunction is also more advanced, that's all. But they all have the same dysfunction. The way in which things are being labeled varies enormously.

If you were from a different culture, Arabic culture, and you walked around Stockholm, you would label things in a different way. The things that you call good and bad would be different. And when you go there, what you call good and bad there would be different from what the locals call good and bad.

Very different. But of course, each person is so identified with the mind-made self and its mental positions and labels, it's almost impossible to step out of identification. Identification means deriving your sense of self from the mental positions, and see that other mental positions are just different mental positions.

To see that one's own conditioning and mental position is no more than that, and does not contain the truth, it is an aspect, at best, an aspect of the truth, an aspect of the totality. In other words, all thought, all mental positions are fragments, fragmentary, relatively true, perhaps. They cannot contain the totality.

So humans don't know this. There's total identification with mind movement, with a mind-created self. And so, then there are the others, which have their form of conditioning are totally identified with that.

And they need each other to enhance their always insufficient sense of self. So this is why humans love to have enemies and make enemies, especially groups, but even individuals do it, unconsciously, of course. The groups that have their group identity, which is a conceptualized story which they're telling themselves, including patterns of reaction and behavior and thinking, these groups have a strong need to have other groups that are their enemies, because through fighting and being in opposition to others, they strengthen their illusory sense of self.

So the boundary around me, the more enemies I have, the stronger this boundary, which is mind-created around me, becomes. And the stronger the sense of separateness, which

is the boundary, the stronger the illusion of self, of me, whether that self is a predominantly personal sense of self, or whether that self is a predominantly collective sense of self, which is our tribe, our religion, our nation, our group, doesn't matter. It's the same principle as at work.

It is a conceptualized identity. And the conceptualized identity is looking, is looking for problems and conflict, because it needs that to, so that this mental structure can define itself. Me, not me.

Me ends here, and there's the rest of the world. And some of the rest of the world I can actually use to make me a little bit bigger, so I'm reaching out to looking for things, new things to add to the content of my mind, to identify with, to make the self more complete. So everybody's looking out for self-completion to add more to me, because I end here.

And then other things in the world, the not-me world, are threatening, because there are many things out in this world that might take away things from me. So I'm, the world is also a dangerous place and a promising place at the same time. I fear the world, and I desire, I want amazing state of consciousness.

So whether on a collective or the personal, there's this great need to complete me through adding more content, mental, because even if you want to acquire more possessions in order to feel a little bit more secure in who you are, in order to feel a little bit bigger, because now you have a big car and a big house, and so your sense of self can expand into the car. The car, not really the car, but the thought form of car. The car itself is quite meaningless, because it's metal, and in a few years it'll be reduced to rust.

So it's not the car, but it is the thought form of car, if it's a big one, the thought form of car that the self, you identify with the thought form. So that is then added to the collection of thought forms that is me, and for a little while, the me feels just grown. I'm getting somewhere, because I've added that to me.

And then it won't be long before the thought form no longer really fulfills its purpose of completing me, and again, it's not quite enough, this car. And then comes maybe the house, and again, for a while it feels, the house, it's not the house, it's not the fact that you own the house. The whole idea of ownership is a fiction.

It's to do with a fictitious sense of self. What does it mean, I own this? You're telling yourself a story in your head about this house, and that story says, it is me.

I own this house, it is mine. It means nothing. If you were insane, and you said, I own half the city of Stockholm, and if you were insane, you could go around to the city telling this to people, and say, okay, you better go for treatment.

You're insane because nobody agrees with you. If you say, I own this huge building, and

nobody agrees with you, then you're insane. If you say, I own this building, and everybody else agrees with you, and they sign a paper to confirm that they agree with you, then you own it.

In either case, it's a story. The only difference is, it's a story that nobody agrees with, in which case you're insane, or it's a story with which everybody agrees, then you're wealthy. But it's a story.

It's part of this, so ownership is part of the story of me. And of course, it loves that, it loves to own, and then, that's, of course, you can, no matter how much you add on that level of thought forms, the thought form of ownership, it's not ever really be enough. So then you have to go on to other things, to add more, to complete me, other people's opinion of me.

This is a little bit less tangible than heavy material things. So that becomes an important thought form if other people think that you are great, you are very important, and then the conceptualized self is always looking out for, to get that recognition. Please, thank you.

You are so great, ah, thank you. Or it might say, oh no, I'm not really great, but it thinks, oh, it feels so good. And then perhaps the entire, you might even, some people amass great wealth on that level, the wealth of thought forms that you are very important, you might become important in the eyes of the world.

And so, then the self certainly feels expanded. They might even build, they don't do that so much anymore these days, a big monument of me before you die. And then that thought forms, surely I must have made it now.

But no, you wake up in the middle of the night with a state of fear. It's not it, and you might even at that point look through the delusion and see what the world has built up around you is a fiction. What the newspapers are saying about you and the glossy pictures about you in case you are, let's say, a famous actor or actress.

And then you suddenly see, this is just a big, all this like a, there's nothing real here. They're talking about some illusory entity. They've created this illusory entity which has nothing to do with me.

And so at that point, perhaps you step beyond when so much has been added to you and you haven't arrived at that sense of having made it. And then at that point, you might begin to go beyond that. And this is usually the point where the spiritual life begins for people.

It's the realization that I cannot complete me on that level. I've tried. And okay, so everybody in a way has tried and failed on that level before the spiritual dimension opens up or before the spiritual search begins.

You must have failed somehow. Of course, everybody fails, except they delude themselves that it can still work out. But on the level of story, on the level of the conceptualized self, it cannot work out because it is in the very structure of that mind-made sense of self that it lives predominantly in a state of discontent and not enough and conflict and problems.

It is part of the structure, not the content. The form that this takes, discontent, not enough, problems, conflict, varies from person to person, from culture to culture. So that's the content.

But it is not the causal factor. It's the structure of a mind-made self which is condemned to continuous, to not making it. And only in movies do they make it.

In novels, but even novels, only in the bad ones, the bad ones have a happy ending and they lived happily ever after. That doesn't happen because the stories after the wedding continues. After the honeymoon, it goes on.

And then the person who was meant to complete you, make you happy, fulfill me, complete me for the rest of my life, fails to live up to that expectation. He or she isn't doing it. You're supposed to completely make me complete, happy.

Fulfill. In many ads you read, looking for man or woman to make me happy. Who could live up to that?

So really, you're looking to the world to complete you which is really the world then becomes translated into thought forms. But it cannot do that. So that's an amazing realization.

The moment you realize that, the spiritual life opens up, but what then happens, you walk into the spiritual, the world of spirituality and not knowing that you're still carrying the same mind structures into your spiritual seeking. At first it looks great. There's some wonderful, new, interesting ideas and you change your view of things.

In some cases, you suddenly believe in God. But not for everybody these days is spiritually equated with belief in God. Of course, spiritual is much vaster.

Or you might believe in certain new things, reincarnation. You suddenly find out about your past lives. And those things are usually called beginning your spiritual life.

And in a way it is. But what happens most of the time is that deeply conditioned mind structure of a self that is needing to complete itself, that goes then into, moves into spiritual seeking. And if you look, very often you find that deep down, I am still looking for that which completes me.

And I'm still looking to the future because it's not here now. So I'm looking to the future

for that which will complete me. In other words, I'm looking for myself in the future.

Again, which is the essence of the mind-made self, which always is looking for an improved, bigger, greater version of itself in the future. So you might look for enlightenment. And to add that, surely then this is, then I will complete myself.

Of course, it's true. There is a, the purpose of your life would complete itself if that transformation of consciousness that is sometimes called awakening or enlightenment happens in you, yes. But you're looking for that as a future attainment.

And so the conceptualized me is still seeking an improved version of itself. So this is a collective conditioning that may still operate in the spiritual seeker. And it's good to see that because inevitably, after some time of seeking, for the ultimate, frustration sets in.

So many workshops. So many books, retreats, and meditation techniques. Why is it that I still haven't arrived?

And the self-talk then continues. Shouldn't I be now have arrived? Maybe that whole thing is a complete illusion.

What then? And some people then arrive at that. They, after 20 years, say, oh, this is all nonsense.

I've tried it all, and I can, let me tell you, it doesn't work. Just go back to your normal life and watch TV, drink beer. I'm not saying it, they would say that to you.

So you get disillusionment with some, and some continue to look, and some find something, maybe an experience, but an experience comes and goes, and then you remember this great experience you had. I want that back. I had it once.

And then you can base the rest, an identity around that, of somebody who had this great experience once. You can tell others about it. And after a while of being, after a while, you get entrenched in that image of somebody who had a great experience.

You don't want any other experience because that sense of self can become so entrenched. You don't know it. That's what you now want.

You don't want to go beyond because it feels you're so identified with it. You're so identified with that thought form. It has a momentum to it.

And so you get stuck in that. You might write a book about it. So that's a strange thing that the spiritual seeker, when you become a spiritual seeker, you do not immediately become free of the conditioning of your mind.

And it continues to operate. And so this, we need to see and recognize, oh yeah, because ultimately it means that there's a belief, the unconscious or conscious belief

that through future, you will find yourself. Which is true on the level of everyday existence that through future, you can attain things on the level of your personal everyday existence where you, through future, you can save enough money to buy a house.

Through future, you can learn to become good at playing this instrument. Through future, you can acquire new knowledge, learn a language, become a physicist, get a degree at university. For all these things, future, of course, is needed.

But this is not what we are talking about. This is using future. We needed future to meet here because it was prearranged.

We said at a certain date, at a certain time, we are going to meet here. We need future. So you can add things to yourself on the level of doing, on the level of acquiring knowledge through future.

And that in itself is not, never a problem. You do it or you don't do it, or you add things to yourself and then you lose them again. You become the greatest mathematician or physicist after years of study, which is fine.

If your sense, if it's not a story in the head, if your sense of self isn't in it, it is simply a very enjoyable activity. If your sense, if the activities in the service of self, of seeking an enhanced version of self, then it becomes heavy. It becomes problematic.

It becomes conflict-ridden. So we're, nothing wrong with learning new things, even making money, but looking for yourself through that doesn't seem to work. So looking to the future for myself, even the spiritual seeker does that.

A greater me. The story finally reaches its climax and its happy ending. So there is a projection of a future state to be achieved, which is a mind form, me, the one who is enlightened.

And the same operates. How do we get out of, if that is an illusion, and if you cannot find yourself there, where are you? Who are you?

How do you step out of that illusion? You have to step out of time because all the thought forms, the conceptualized sense of self operates through past and future. The past gives you your identity, your insufficient identity, your insufficient sense of self, sometimes great sense of self.

If something has just been added, then it looks, I've made it, and then again becomes insufficient. So the past gives you your insufficient sense of self. The future promises completion of the insufficient sense of self.

The future promises you yourself. What is continuously missed when you live in and

through a conceptualized sense of self is now because the conceptualized sense of self can't do much with now. It's not interested in now.

It's only interested in past, which gives it its identity, and it's interested in future, which is going to complete it. In the meantime, the now is regarded, more often than not, most of the time, as an obstacle to my self-completion. Isn't that amazing?

The now, the only thing there ever is, the only place where life ever can be, is regarded as an obstacle to finding myself, ultimately. This is why I need to make the now into a means to an end. I'm just trying to get, don't, I'm trying to get there.

There was a man practicing Buddhist metta meditation. I love this house. Love spreads out to the entire universe.

I love this person. I love this body. I love this house.

I love this city. I love this country. And the little, his little daughter comes in and opens the door and he shouts, oh, for God's sake, can't you leave me?

Can't you leave me alone? Can't you see I'm doing my metta meditation? He's trying to get somewhere.

He's trying to become a good meditator. He's trying to become a totally loving being. This is serious business.

So the amazing thing then, in that humans have made, the delusion, the dysfunction is to believe that now is an obstacle to finding myself. Of course, yes, it does appear to be quite often because the now seems to limit you quite often. What happens in this field of now very often is some kind of limitation.

Here I am sitting on this bus, but I'm meant, my destiny must be much greater than sitting on this bus. And I'm still sitting on this bus, and I know I'm meant for much greater things. Or in this little room, or wherever you are.

Here I am in this job. This can't be it. This is all wrong.

It doesn't fit into the story of, the now seems to conflict with the story of me, the way it should unfold. There's something wrong here. I need to get away from this now as quickly as possible.

Okay. And there comes the future, the projection of future, and a conceptualized self in the future. And so you leave the now, and you can see when people leave the now, they lose a liveness, a veil descends, and they're gone.

And most people on our planet are gone a lot of the time because they don't even see you. They see their thoughts. At best, they see you through their thoughts.

And you know that their thoughts are labeling you, and they're labeling you according to their conditioning. And they're trying to find out if you can complete, make them feel bigger, complete their sense of self, or whether you are a threat to their sense of self. They have to work this out quickly.

Every time you meet somebody, you have to figure out, can I use him or her to add to me, or is he or she threatening me? Of course, when you look at it, you can see it. It is a form of, yes, madness, but it's normal.

So normal these days equates with mad. That's how it is. That's how the mind operates.

So the amazing thing is to see, on the one hand, time seems to be such a strange thing and seems to be all pervasive and everywhere. Time, you can't get out of it. It's like sitting on an express train, and it pulls you along.

You can't get out of time. It never stops. Whatever any experience is fleeting, it comes, and it's gone.

Even us sitting here, very soon, it'll be past. Before you came here, it was future. This is very strange.

Before you came here, this gathering was in the future. Perhaps you thought about it. It had no reality except as a thought form.

Then it actually, here it is, the immediacy of it. And then, before you know it, it's gone because the express train never stops, and it's past, you remember it. But the memory, again, is only a thought form, and the only place where you can remember the past is now.

And the only place where you can project the future before you came here, that was now, because nothing can happen or be that is not now. So we have the strange paradox that, on the one hand, time seems to govern everything. Very strange thing, time.

I visited some people at Christmas that I hadn't seen in many, many years, and when I first saw them, for a second or two, it looked as if they had some dreadful illness. But then I realized, my God, time that did that to you. A shock, because all I could remember of these people was the photos taken 25 years ago.

Very cruel, time must be. So I don't know who, there was a poet, I believe, who compared time to a fire that consumes us all, and we are in the middle of it. Not a bad analogy, because what fire leaves behind is ashes, and of course, very soon, all of us will be that.

The physical forms will have been consumed by time. Another analogy has been given of time devours you. So it's, on the one hand, you have this paradox, it seems so real, and

it does that.

It seems to do that to you, but on the other hand, past, because time means past and future, it means that movement from, on the other hand, it doesn't really exist. Where is it? It's always, life is always now.

It's always now, never not now. So where is time? It seems so real.

Of course, it's in the human mind, as the memory of past, the projection of future, and then, how can it do this to our bodies? If time is not ultimately real, then maybe the body isn't ultimately real. And I will leave it at that, because this is not philosophy.

Let's put this aside. Simply to see that how vital now is, and if now, if you regard it as an obstacle to where you want to get with your conceptualized sense of self, you miss the most vital, the only real thing there is, which is now. So many people have the feeling that one day soon, their life is going to start, not quite started yet.

Stepping out of the conceptualized sense of self, which depends for its survival on past and future, on continuously dwelling in past and future mentally, that keeps the mind-made self going. The self that the Buddha perhaps was the first, I don't know who recognized 2,600 years ago, the central recognition, realization of the Buddha was that the self is an illusion. That was the central core of the teaching.

Wow, and that was, that long ago, he recognized that when human madness wasn't even quite as mad yet as it is now, it was already mad, but not yet not this mad. And he saw it then. And he saw that as long as you're trapped in that illusion, you're going to suffer.

The illusion and the suffering go together. So not knowing who you are beyond the mind-made sense of self is very frustrating. You never may quite make it.

And even the spiritual seeker is seeking through future. If a spiritual seeker could stop being a seeker and simply acknowledge, honor, and say yes to now as the primordial spiritual practice, one must align oneself internally with the isness, the suchness of this moment. The only place where life ever unfolds is in the space of now.

So the simple bringing a yes to what is internally instead of no. No matter what form this moment takes because that changes continuously. Now you're here, very soon you'll be elsewhere.

So the form of now shifts again. But the strange thing is wherever you go, it's now. Any time you look at your watch, you may say it's such and such a time, but it's even more true that it's now.

Whenever you look at your watch, it must be now. This is even more true than whatever time it is or date it is. So a strange thing happens when you cooperate with the isness of

now internally, welcome it, no matter what form it takes.

The form that the now takes creates the delusion that there are many different moments in your life in every day, in every hour, because the form changes so quickly, so often. But it's not true that there are many different moments. There's always this one now moment.

The form changes. The space of now remains now. Here we come to the essence.

I said the space of now, when your attention moves into now, there's the form it takes. Here it's this room, the voice, the lights, space. Your attention, you acknowledge this.

And suddenly you become aware of, words can only point to this. I could say you become aware of the now directly as a field that underlies whatever happens or a space that is always around whatever happens, a vast space that is the space of now. In it, things come and go.

So you can actually sense the underlying field in which everything happens. That means you've become still but alert. Because you cannot sense that unless you are still and alert.

And then you can suddenly know the now beyond that which is happening in it, which may be good or bad, changes. That is the depth. And now you are aligning yourself with the power that lies hidden in the now.

Which is one with the one power there is. And really it means you're aligning yourself with yourself. There's a depth that arises through the simple act of allowing this now to be.

Through that simple act, you go beyond the form that this now takes, which may look as if it limited you. And suddenly there's a depth within yourself. Before there was only a reactive little me.

Yeah, I don't like this, I want to get away from this now. And suddenly, through the yes to what is, there is this deep space which is so much deeper than anything that is happening in it. This is only a little pointer.

So you're becoming aware of the space of now through allowing the form of now. If you only react to the form of now, you remain trapped in a form identity which is the thought form of me, which is reactive. It strengthens itself through reactivity.

So as you continue to react to the form of now, you strengthen the self. If you allow the form that this now takes, then who you are beyond the self, the conditioned, arises as a deep stillness, aliveness, intelligence beyond noise, silent intelligence. So this cannot, who you are beyond form, obviously you cannot encapsulate that in a concept.

You are then, in Buddhist terminology, free of self, the illusion of self. Or you can use other terminology, Indian teachings. You have found the self as yourself, not the little mind made self, the one self, the essence of your being.

The Buddhist teaching is less likely to become a concept because it denies what you are not. And what or who you are emerges by itself. So there's, and that arises through the allowing.

And another, what goes with that realization is the mind is not very important in this. Thought doesn't get you there. The realization comes when thought makes room for presence.

And people ask, well, I can't, how do I stop my mind? It won't stop. A very quick way is simply to become friends with now.

Because a lot of that compulsive mind activity, most of it is to do with how you try to figure out how you can get away from now and create something better. Not that you cannot create anything better externally, but not through self, not as to find yourself. Playing with the phenomenal world is fine.

Self-seeking in that is frustrating. So the simple, for the spiritual seeker, the practice is simply not to seek in the future anymore. Bring the seeking into now.

And you might ask, how can I seek in the now? Doesn't seeking imply future? Where is it, where, where am I?

Seeking, doesn't it mean you're looking somewhere else? Well, there's an intensity to seeking. And that intensity can move into now.

You bring that intensity so it's not seeking for something, but bring that intensity that is behind the seeking into now, which is the, face the now with that intensity, that alertness. And whatever appears in it, you meet the now, so to speak. Ultimately, this is all language, it's never quite right.

But ultimately, you are the now, but don't tell anybody. You face the now fully, completely. What happens?

Now, more often than, a challenge comes into the space of now, as a difficult person or difficult situation, there it is, a turbulent moment of a person with a pain body attack coming at you, saying, you did that, or why don't you, you should have. And usually, you would go into the self would play out its conditioning, and it would react in the normal, predictable, old way of defense mechanisms come up, you shout back, or you hit him, if you're very unconscious. The normal, the thing that you can observe in people's lives, in personal interactions, after you know a person for a while, you can predict how they're going to react.

In relationships, that is being played out in most relationships, almost word by word, once a week, once every two weeks, action, reaction, pressing a button, defense mechanism, shouting, blaming, justifying, you, no, not you, me, you, you did that, and so on. It's all easily predicted, once you know a person, you can say anything, and you know how they're going to react. And so, because every reaction implies they are fighting this moment, they are fighting the form that this moment takes.

And if you happen to be in the space of this moment, they are fighting you. If it's a traffic light, they are fighting that moment, the situation, it shouldn't be happening. And there's a dialogue that goes with it in the head.

And so you realize the fundamental fact that whatever happens cannot be otherwise, because it's one with the totality, everything is totally connected. If it happens, it not only cannot, it cannot be otherwise, it is the right thing for this moment. So you get, you're taking responsibility for your life.

People think it's about getting the right pension plan and life insurance and save enough money and do everything. That's all peripheral, you can do or not do that. But the true meaning of taking responsibility for your life is to take responsibility for the one place where life is, which is now.

Not a conceptualized version of my life, which is a story. That's secondary, what you do or don't do there. You won't do the right thing anyway for the story.

But if you're now taking responsibility for life is then taking responsibility for this moment. What does that mean? One could say new age teachings may tell you this is happening because you manifested it.

There's some truth in that. I'm not saying that it's too extreme. Some people in this room might disagree with it.

I avoid saying things that anybody can disagree with. So I'm not telling you that you manifested it or that it has some truth in it. But to simply see that the inevitability of is, it already is.

This moment is as it is already. And it is one with the totality. And the little me says, this isn't what I wanted.

And it even gets angry if a new age teacher tells you you manifested it. He says, I resent that statement. How dare you say that?

I know very well that I didn't manifest this dreadful situation. So, no, you may be right. But the fact remains, this moment is as it is.

Is it possible to argue with that? No, it is as it is. To recognize is and align yourself with

what is.

Yes. Say yes to this. And you'll be amazed if you meet what is in that state of yes, you meet it, whatever form this moment takes, the isness of this moment, you'll meet it in, there's a field of intelligence, of a current of aware presence with which you meet this situation and now.

All that is necessary is to give full attention to the challenge of this moment. It's so, very often it is challenging. That's what life is all about.

The world isn't here to make you happy, but to make you conscious. So you meet the challenge of now with a yes and then there's a flow of aware presence with which you look at this challenge, this moment, this situation. And in that, the conditioned mind is not operating because there is awareness there, aware presence.

Not the old thought forms are not operating. The old thought forms need to deny what is, need to try and get away from it. And the intelligence of the old thought forms is very limited.

It's no intelligence at all really, or very limited intelligence. So an enormous intelligence comes into play when you meet the now. The portal is open, you're not resisting it.

And through the non-resistance, this, what one could say, a current of awareness, which is intelligence itself, meets the form of now. And then if action is possible or necessary, action happens. If action is unnecessary or impossible, no action happens.

There's simply, the complete acceptance remains, no action is possible at this moment, that's it. You might be in prison. You tried cutting through the bars, it didn't work.

You tried other ways of breaking out, it didn't work. So you say, okay, at this moment, no action seems possible. And there you sit on a chair or on the floor, walls, ceiling, floor, stomach not full, body feeling cold.

This moment is as it is. And suddenly, a peace arises. And the mind cannot understand it.

Why can't I be peaceful in this dreadful place? But it's, where does it come from? It comes from because you aligned yourself with now, completely.

And then, if action is possible, it will arise. Perhaps suddenly somebody opens the door, and you're able to run out, unlikely, but possible. Or they let you free.

I received, sometimes I receive letters from prison, people who enter that they say, my life has changed totally, but I'm still in the same place. And I'm teaching others, they write, there are little groups in prison of people who are entering that state of presence, and they're using their situation as a teacher. The now, this is because the now teaches

you to enter the surrendered state of consciousness, which is a state of alignment.

And one person wrote to me two years ago from prison, and said, I have to do another nine years here, and it's fine. And two years later, he was out. He wasn't even up for parole for another five years.

I don't know how it happened. The strange thing is, when you meet the now, in a state of alignment, which is the surrendered state of consciousness, intelligence comes into operation that is far greater than what you could plan through the conscious mind. Sometimes it comes as spontaneous action through you, and people have found it occasionally, accidentally, in very dangerous situations.

It sometimes happens that the conditioned mind makes room for a greater intelligence and suddenly takes over, and you do just the one right thing, and you didn't know how you did it, and there was no decision-making involved. It just happened. And then the old mind comes back, and then the reporters come and say, how could you have done such a wonderful thing?

You're a hero. And they say, I don't know. It just happened.

I did it. Don't know how or why. And so an intelligence comes into play because you are aligned with the totality that can also act upon that situation externally.

Suddenly, something comes in to resolve that situation. And so this comes in the form of coincidences, synchronistic events. The more you're aligned with now, the more you will find in your life happening coincidences, synchronistic events that suddenly come in, and you didn't know, wow, this is incredible.

How could this have? I didn't do it. It just happened.

And at other times, it may come through you as a realization which becomes a thought. This is where thought can be very helpful. When you are aligned with the greater intelligence, then thought can sometimes come in and give form to a realization.

Oh, and then suddenly you speak it. You say it. Or it may come as spontaneous action with no thought.

This is the simple way of everything. After that shift has happened of aligning yourself with now, you are being lived, not... And that is the, you no longer feel that I have to make a living and somehow get my life right.

All you need to get right and take responsibility for is this moment. So how do you, let's recapitulate. How do you take responsibility for this moment?

You take responsibility for this moment by getting it right. How do you get it right? What does that mean?

By recognizing the rightness of it already. You recognize it is already right, even if the mind says this is dreadful and there are many situations that you may go into in this world that the mind would call dreadful. And yet what you cannot argue with is that this is as it is.

So people have this realization in the seemingly most unacceptable situation where you would say, how can you expect this person to practice what you are saying in that situation? That situation is totally unacceptable and people have done it whose body could no longer function, couldn't move any limbs anymore. They entered that state and it happened.

People in prison camps have reported, some of them entered that state of complete alignment and the shift happened, enormous peace. And in many cases, the seemingly dreadful situations, a healing factor or a redemptive factor comes in, particularly in situations that the mind would have judged as dreadful or totally unacceptable. Of those situations, there may be many in this world because this world is a manifestation of the human mind, the world that we have created.

So it's not surprising that when you move about this world, you encounter many dreadful situations because the human mind is very dysfunctional, of course. So the healing and redemptive factor comes in through recognizing nevertheless that this moment cannot be otherwise because it already is. And that becomes the basis for change.

And instead of the little me fighting and saying, I'm going to show the world that I can do, show God I can do a much better job than he can, he should have resigned long ago. Or you project some image that this authority figure has failed completely. God, how can God allow this if he, all concepts, just this.

So that is the primordial practice. That's also the end of being a spiritual seeker. Oh, what a pity.

You could have a nice romantic image in your head about the spiritual seeker who hasn't quite arrived yet, but one day will arrive. Or the miserable seeker who's desperately seeking and very unhappy. All kinds of stories you can tell yourself in your head about me, my life, my...

So it's the shift of attention from being in thought to being in now. That is the awakening. The awakening is the awakening out of identification with thought, with mind forms, with a stream of mental noise.

You awaken out of that into presence, into now. So it's like it's the awakening from a dream. Very much, this is why for a long time in spiritual teachings, Eastern and also Western, the term awakening is used because it's very much like waking up out of a dream.

And even Jesus used many parables that are to do with staying awake, awake, wakeful, the state of wakefulness. The strange thing is that Jesus' teachings exist, we only really have it in fragments. There are fragments of a very deep teaching, greatly misunderstood, but it has great depth if you see it.

Now, if humanity were not ready for this shift in consciousness, these words would be meaningless to say you can, accept this moment as if you had chosen it. Remember, I'm not saying you chose it, but you can accept it as if you had chosen it because you recognize the inevitability of it. That must be sanity.

And so, many humans are now ready for this shift. And this gathering is part of that transformation. It's not so much that the transformation is going to happen on the planet, all I know that it is happening here and now.

It looks like a person speaking and some people listening on the surface level, but there's a greater depth to it. It is a collective event. This event, this is part of the transformation of human consciousness.

And it's much more significant than it looks on the surface, because on the surface, only a few people in a room listening to a speaker. Probably won't be on Swedish news tonight, not yet. So if you were not ready, it would all be meaningless.

I would be talking to an empty room and saying, surrender to this moment, become aligned with now, and there's nobody there. That would mean humans are not ready yet. They can't hear it.

If you can hear it, it means you're ready, because some people ask me, well, isn't it only after you've become liberated, then you can accept the now? So they say, aren't you telling us something that only after liberation we can practice? It's a good point.

But the truth is that you are already in the middle of the liberation. That's why you can hear it. This is, and even if you cannot yet dwell in that state continuously, it is emerging through this form.

How else could you have sat here for so long without running out of the room or falling asleep? So that's the good news, with all the bad news that we hear when we listen to the media. And there's no need even for you to believe in anything, that it's happening, it's living it.

And even if you live it five minutes a day, five minutes of alignment with now. Wow. That's more than some humans do in a lifetime.

So let's honor this beautiful, deep, good now. It always is good deep down. Surface, good, bad, good, bad.

Deep down, there is an inherent goodness to now. So there's no need to believe in that. You can easily see, find that for yourself.

Thank you. As you know, this gathering is part of the transformation of consciousness that is happening. The essence of that transformation, one could put it this way, is that thinking becomes secondary in your life.

It is no longer running your life, dominating your life. You are no longer run by thought. For a long time, thinking has been primary.

So we are here not to add to thought, but to enter that realm that is beyond thought and to dwell in that dimension that is free of thought. And from there, be able to use thought. Unproblematically, and even in a very powerful way, because thought has certain power.

But before you can have full access to that power, almost paradoxically, one could say, you need to have gone beyond thought. So we are here to allow that dimension in yourself in which you are fully conscious and yet no conceptualization, mental labeling is taking place. That is the essence of being fully awake.

We are allowing that to arise here in during these three hours, strange, three hours time, to enter that state of consciousness that ultimately is beyond time because thought is bound up with time. All time is in the mind. Thought and time go together.

There's nothing wrong with it. In this dimension here, you need that. But not getting lost in it, finding that deeper dimension in yourself.

And the strange thing is, there isn't all that much that you need to understand about that state that is free of thought because needing to understand more about that state is thought attempting to grasp that which by its very essence is beyond thought. And so thought might say, I don't quite fully understand yet what you mean by free of thought. Can you define a little bit further?

Now, the essence of our being together here one could say is, although I want to avoid two esoteric sounding words, it is a kind of, with reservations, I use that word, it is a kind of transmission of a state of consciousness, not coming from a person because that state of consciousness is beyond person and all personal selfhood is thought-based. So that state transmits itself only, of course, if there is a readiness. Otherwise, it would not reach you.

The veil of thought would be too dense and the transmission of that state that is free of thought would not reach that dimension in yourself that is also free of thought because of the density or one could say the noise of the veil of thinking. And then you would sit here and think he isn't really saying very much. It's not enough.

To fill me, to add more to me. So to be attentive to the transmission and it doesn't go

one way, something in you responds to presence because that is the presence in you. Presence is the word I sometimes use to describe the state of consciousness that is free of thought.

And that comes forward here. So what that simply means in simple terms, what is all that is needed here for you is to not believe that the essence of this intensive is in the words. One could say the essence of this intensive is in the space in between the words.

One could even say the essence of this intensive is in the stillness that arises here in this room and within yourself. Stillness being one way of one perspective on that state is, yes, it is a state of stillness. Cessation of mental noise.

That is the awakened state. That is where the conditioned does not operate. It is the arising of the unconditioned.

There is something else in you that does not want to be here. There's a momentum to the conditioned self and to thought itself that feels uncomfortable with this because it is threatening the primacy, the dominance of thought. And that may rise up as a wave in yourself of thinking that takes you away from here completely.

It can also rise up as a restlessness. And when that happens, all that's needed is to be aware of that. Don't expect anything.

Don't expect the state that is free of thought to be there as your predominant state. It's arising and it tends to arise briefly then become obscured again by thought. Then it arises again.

Obscured again. So it's a shifting back and forth for quite a while. But as this happens, already a change is taking place in what one could call the way in which thought operates in you.

One could say your relationship with thought is changing already because even as thought arises, you can recognize thought as thought and not totally believe in every thought that arises. Totally be identified with the perspective that is implied in a thought. Every thought is some kind of judgment, some kind of labeling.

It implies a perspective. No thought contains all perspectives and it's conditioned. So you're no longer totally in the stream of thinking, but you can be there and see that stream very often.

Maybe there is in the background an awareness. And then the same thought that before made you unhappy periodically, a thought about me and my life situation, a thought about me and there's something to do with me, some judgment, the same thought arises. Perhaps it says, you see, you have failed again.

You see, there's no point in all of this. You can't do it. This is just one of many possible thoughts.

Or the thought may arise, if only they would let me do things, because I'm so much better than everybody else. And you don't completely believe in that because you also notice when these thoughts arise and you completely believe in these thoughts, you can notice what that feels like, the emotion that accompanies the thought that you are not good enough or not worthy, or that you are so good, if only others could see it and you can watch the emotion that arises when you completely believe in a thought. And more often than not, it's some form of pain that arises when you totally believe in each arising thought.

So one day, your life may look very dark and bleak because a certain stream of thinking arises that habitually comes up. It may be connected to pain body, which we will look at. So one day, your entire life looks totally bleak and all your thought processes are negative.

And if you completely believe in each thought that arises, then that will feel dreadful. So, you know the two masks they have in theaters, comedy, one day, good thoughts, and then tragedy, mouth goes down, drama, bad thoughts, and totally in that. And one could say behind that, there actually can be a presence that watches both kinds of thought without totally believing.

You see it for what it is, conditioned thinking. And then quite quickly, thought loses its power to make you unhappy. Why?

Because if you look at arising unhappiness, how closely it is linked to certain thought processes in your head, not really to the situation, but to the way in which you interpret the situation through thought. And the way in which you interpret the situation through thought, of course, is to do with the conditioning of your mind. And so, this is a wonderful, thought is no longer, can no longer make you unhappy.

You see the relativity of thought, and you see how repetitive many of the thoughts are that go through your mind. How often they have done exactly the same, made you unhappy. The same thoughts in some people for years, year after year after year, the same thought patterns arise periodically, sometimes every day.

And they totally believe in it. They don't know that, for example, this thought may be there because that is, my mother told me that when I was four, five, six, seven, 10 years old, she would say certain things, just one of the ways in which certain thought patterns become conditioned thinking. And so, you might have noticed, parents who are not very intelligent tell their children that they are stupid.

They cannot see that children don't have the same maturity as adults. They say, you're

stupid, you're stupid. After a few years, of course, you get conditioned into believing that there's something not quite right with you, and basically you are stupid.

You are stupid. And it's not always on the surface, but it comes up periodically in some way or another. This is only one of many possible ways in which society tells you who you are, and this goes conditioned thinking.

The world tells you who you are. School environment, social environment. Or you could rebel against that.

Which is also conditioned. You don't conform to anything anymore. You do the opposite of what your parents expect you to do.

And that can make you unhappy, too. And you're not free. You are forced to go into another form of conditioning.

So to be there as the witness of the conditioning that is taking place continuously, the conditioned thinking, thought processes. And then they don't make you unhappy anymore. They are recognized as conditioned thinking.

The old record, it used to be called record. Now it's the old CD, with better sound quality, but basically still the same. It's playing again.

There it is. And that's an amazing thing. If thought loses its power to make you unhappy, then you realize your unhappiness, how closely it is linked with being identified with the mind, the thinking mind, the stream of thinking.

It's not in the situation. I mentioned last night, Shakespeare. Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

And most people react to a situation in their lives, anything that arises in the now. They react out of the conditioned thought patterns. And they confuse totally.

They mix up the situation and their reaction to the situation, which is conditioned thinking. So they might say something like, something absolutely dreadful has happened to me today. It's just this awful thing came, and this awful person came, and he was so rude, and you're telling a story, you're mixing up the simple event and your own interpretation and reaction to the event.

They become a single phenomenon. You can't see that here is, all events are neutral in the now. The way in which I react, or the way in which I interpret the event is the conditioning of my mind.

And in very unconscious people, the two get totally confused. So the event and their reaction become one single phenomenon. And you say something awful has happened.

The awful is my reaction. The event is as it is, always. This is just a simple example.

So to see how the conditioning colors everything, what an amazing thing to become free of that, to see how little freedom otherwise there is in a human being. If that unconditioned dimension does not arise, you live as if somebody had placed a script in your mind, and now you're identified with a script in your mind and for the rest of your life, forced to act out the script in your mind, like an actor on stage who has completely forgotten that he's acting out a script. So identified with a role that he or she doesn't know who he or she is anymore.

Beyond the role. So that's the conceptualized self with its conditioning that we pointed to yesterday. That is the essence of not knowing who you are.

And that's why, and then you're trying to fill yourself up by adding more. It doesn't work. So this is freedom arises now, the possibility of freedom arises here and now as we allow that dimension to arise that is unconditioned.

And then honor, yes, you still honor the forms of your life, the roles that you play in relation to society. You play certain roles. They come to an end eventually.

You play the role of mother, you honor that. If you're totally identified with your sense of self and you are only a mother, and those kinds of mothers can be too much. And you can never let go of your role of mother.

And then your children become adults and you want to continue to protect them. But of course, there's an English word, smothering, which is to stifle. Then that's what you do.

You cannot free, you're so identified with the role, you cannot allow it to come to an end. And so we all know mothers, this is just one example, who cannot relinquish, let go of their role. So when you are 30 and 40 and 50, your mother still totally acts out that role towards you.

You're a little child. You don't know what's best for you. I know what's best for you because you're only a little child.

I'm your mother. I know. And they have wonderful intentions.

They don't, so this is only one tiny example of being trapped in a role and being identified with certain thought forms with their respective reactive patterns. And there's so much suffering created by humans for each other because they cannot, they cannot recognize that they are trapped in a role. And then the adult child whom the mother does not want to grow up remains a child in the eyes of the mother, reacts against it, feels stifled, feels angry, doesn't realize that the mother is only trapped in a role, and then mistakes the role that the mother is trapped in for who she is.

And then they hate each other. And so, and then the possibility arises to honor the role that you play temporarily as mother, that usually that comes to an end when the child reaches adulthood and throughout the child's life, you realize that mother is a temporary function which is honored and is a way of relating. But not exclusively, there is another dimension where whatever role you play and honor, while you play and honor that role, there is another dimension in you that also flows into which is beyond the role.

And that would, for example, if you are a mother, you would relate to your child, not exclusively through the role model, but another, an unconditioned intelligence would come in that relates to the child, not as a child, because even child is a temporary role. You're not reducing yourself or the other person to a role because inside a child, there is great intelligence already. So although you treat that on the one level, you are the mother relating to the child, on a deeper level, you are consciousness relating to consciousness.

And you honor that in the other person that is beyond the temporary role. And people will love you for that because you free them by recognizing that dimension in them that is beyond the roles that they are playing and that they perhaps themselves are completely trapped in. But they feel when you recognize a dimension in them that is beyond the role, you free them a little bit and they feel freer in your presence.

So what that means is presence is arising in you. And so you might meet a person, a bank manager. You're meeting your bank manager to discuss a loan, an important business loan.

And so you're going there. And if you cannot look beyond the temporary role that you are playing and the temporary role that he is playing, and perhaps he is completely identified with his role, he is totally a bank manager. Perhaps even when he gets home, he can't let go of being a bank manager, it happens.

Or maybe at home, he adopts some other role. Let's say he is totally trapped in his role as bank manager and his whole identity is in that. And yet you come there and now, how can you do that?

How can you not be trapped in role playing with him? This is very simple. It doesn't require a complex mechanism or technique.

The simplicity of stepping out of roles in yourself and others, not keeping others trapped in a role, because you would be a little apprehensive in your role. He is the dominant role in this interaction and you are the one who needs a loan. And simply, and this is key, simply by bringing into that interaction a space of stillness, alert stillness.

As you sit there and listen to him explain the figures, the numbers. As you sit there, you sit there not as a role anymore because the moment you allow that alert stillness that is

presence, that is the state, that is the space between thoughts, you allow that to rise and perhaps you need to sense your inner body as an anchor so that you can be there in stillness. And you listen and alertness is there as you sit with this bank manager, just one example of thousands possibly, all the same.

You sit there in that state of alert presence, allowing this moment to be as it is, completely not needing to prepare the next statement, but simply be there as a field of conscious presence. You've stepped out of your role. You can go back into the role and just play it a little bit and then ask a question.

Well, what are the terms of this loan? How many years do I have to pay it back? Okay, and then you can enter the role a little bit so that you function in this world so that he doesn't think you're not going to give him a little piece of paper that says, I'm in total silence, I'm practicing, so I cannot answer your questions.

Because if you do that, without realizing it, you will have created another role, a very spiritual one, hoping that this will impress him. It probably won't. But, so it's not that anybody really notices that much of that shift.

You remain normal, so to speak. You can function normally. You don't have to become abnormal in your behavior.

Sometimes, as this arises, the ego can come back. Ego means conceptualized sense of self. It can come back at any stage and claim some new story of me as the great spiritual one, for example.

I was in a casual conversation with somebody and I simply asked an innocent question, where were you born? And he said, I was never born. And he looked very superior and made me feel, how could you have asked such a stupid question?

Of course he was never born. And so it's not necessary to stand out with anything. The strange thing is, as you step, you can enter a role and then almost one could say you have one foot out of your role in being, in stillness, and one foot in your role.

And it's a strange thing that happens. Everything works so much better. Even the roles, the interactions that you play with the roles, so much better.

An enormous enhancement of human interaction. Why? Because you are no longer trapped in a narrow self concept.

And when you are trapped in a narrow sense of me, all you ever, the only way you can relate is through wanting something from somebody or fearing something from somebody. So that would be the case with a bank manager. You would sit there and you would manifest both characteristics of the egoic state.

You want something from him, of course, and you fear him also. He might not give it to you. And that emanates, of course, the egoic state with its wanting and fearing emanates.

The wanting emanates, I need something from you, and the fear emanates. And that creates more ego in the other person, more deeply entrenched in his role because you strengthen his role by wanting something from him and fearing him. So you trap him even more in his role because you want something from him and you fear him.

That's part of his role, how he relates to others. They all want something from him and they all fear him. So you keep him, his role gets strengthened because you're trapped in your role.

So his role loves that because now he feels he really knows who he is because you're confirming to him that the essence of his identity is this bank manager. So both are being trapped. You trap yourself, you trap him.

And this is one example of hundreds, continuously it happens in daily life. Your function, your different roles, getting trapped in the conditioning. I said to somebody, are you a teacher, school teacher?

And she said, how did you know that I'm a school teacher? Everything in her was a school teacher. It was after 20 years, 25 years.

And so not to be with her and then to allow, bring in the space of stillness into the interaction. You free yourself and you free the other person. And an intelligence begins to operate in that situation that could not operate before when you were trapped in conditioned mind structures.

So that's, it is as simple as that. It does not require complicated steps before you can get there. Or some weird techniques.

Simply sit there in alert stillness, be there. And you step out of every role, not losing your capacity to honor that role and function as that role. So that is the beginning of the new state of consciousness.

That is unconditioned. And that is something that is very new in most humans. That it's possible to bring stillness into every interaction.

Not that you lose the capacity to speak. You might speak less, not in any way that anybody would notice necessarily, but you may speak less. But what you speak will have greater power because it comes out of the intelligence of the unconditioned.

And gradually the old CDs losing their momentum. They are running down. The more you allow the unconditioned to arise, the more the old thought forms are running down

because they are not replenished.

So this is how any situation you use, no matter where you are, bring some stillness into that. If a little gap, especially human, the human situations. Now, I would recommend to practice not only in human situations, but use nature as a teacher for the state that is free of thinking, stillness.

And when you go into nature, use that and allow stillness to arise as you perceive anything natural, particularly natural, because man-made things tend to be made through thought. Except those man-made things that express the highest quality, great works of art, or sometimes works that embody enormous quality. Why do they, and people can sense.

It doesn't require a lot of sensitivity to sense that certain things have quality and others don't. Quality means somehow the doing, whoever made this, did not make the present moment into a means to an end. Full attention was flowing into the doing.

The doing was not with a profit motive or producing as many pieces as possible within one hour. But there was the quality of attention, of giving full attention, which means stillness. Because whenever you give full attention to anything, there is a field of stillness that arises.

Thought is not attention anymore. Your consciousness level goes down into thought. And then it can suddenly go up again into attention, which implies still presence.

And some people enter that state while they make something, are great artists, and that what they make somehow still contains that energy field of that state of consciousness out of which that work of art came. That is the difference between art and just non-art. Nobody really can say, what is it that makes this into a work of art, and then this is not really art.

It didn't come out of presence. So whatever you do then, whether you make something or whether it is simply a perception, whether it is simply a moment of perception, the only way I can describe that is to say it is of high quality, quality, which implies this moment is not made into a means to an end. It is honored fully.

So the arising of this new consciousness, the arising of stillness is so closely connected with what we talked about yesterday, which is not making this moment into a means to an end. Let's go back to the bank manager. You're meeting the bank manager.

If you want something from him, you're reducing him to a means to an end because you're reducing this moment to a means to an end. I need to get this loan. Now the obstacle that then appears in your past that you feel you need to overcome is what appears in the now is this form of the bank manager.

Now he may be an obstacle to where you want to be. The mental projection, I need that. You're not honoring this moment fully.

It's a means to an end. And most human beings live like that continuously, which means no true intelligence ever arises in their life. No true power ever arises in their life, even if they might be intelligent on a small level, intellectual, good at manipulating words and become a great professor of this or that.

But if you look at their lives, it's not an expression of intelligence. So see how freeing this is, bring stillness. So use nature whenever your visual perceptions, you look at a tree, a flower, the sky, water, auditory perceptions of nature, birds, the wind and the trees.

Perceive it through stillness. Labels are unimportant when you're out in nature. A depth arises that was never there before.

Be with a tree and then a thought may come after five seconds, 10 seconds, and then you watch the arising of this thought, which may be about the tree or maybe about something totally different. Maybe about the stock market. Then you watch the thought arise and subside and you stay with a tree and again, a space of stillness arises in which the perception happens.

You will be amazed how much nature can teach you because nature lives in the state of oneness. Oneness with itself, with the totality. And most of nature is very still.

So nature can teach you the state of no mind, as it's sometimes called in certain teachings from the East, no mind. Nature is a master at no mind because there's no mind in this flower. Yes, it's an expression of consciousness manifesting as this beautiful form.

Are you reducing this to a label? Can you truly stay with the mystery of this and allow the perception to arise in a field of stillness in which thought may still come here and there, it no longer matters very much. The thought comes in, goes away, the field of stillness remains.

And then something one could almost say communicates itself to you from the flower. But the main thing is what you're being taught is to exist in the state of no mind. But you have not the fundamental difference between you and the flower or between you and the cat is that you have been through the stage of thought as the human species has.

You go beyond, you're rising above thought. So one could say the whole of nature is pre-thought. Humans now transcend thought.

They rise above thought into no mind. But you meet again in the state of no mind, but there is a depth of knowing in you that is not there in the flower. The flower exists in the beautiful state of holiness, wholeness, holiness.

But as you transcend thought, there is a depth to that same state in you that is not yet in the flower, but you bring it to the flower. The flower exists in that state naturally, always has done. Humans have lost it and now are regaining that state of primordial connectedness with the one.

And whenever you lose something and then regain it, you know it at a deeper level than before you had lost it. So you can bring, it's not only that nature teaches you, one could almost say that nature is also waiting for you, for that state of consciousness to arise through you in which nature, because ultimately you are not separate from this flower, you are deeply connected. And ultimately nature recognizes itself through you, through your state of consciousness.

It recognizes its own sacredness and beauty through your recognition. And nature loves you for that. That is your interaction with nature.

So nature becomes a teacher of the state of no mind. But the greatest teaching is to sit in that field here, allow it to arise here. Use one of the doorways into that state.

And now one could say I've pointed to three. One is you sit here connected with the inner energy field of your body. If you are not, you become restless.

You rise up into the mind and you're no longer really here nor do you want to be here. As a thought-based entity, you don't want to be here. So if that is the case, observe that you're up here trying to get to the next moment.

A restlessness arises, impatience. You're thinking about who you're going to see tonight, phone calls that you have to make. And tomorrow morning, the problems you're facing, the normal human state is back.

Go into body. Once you recognize that, it's fine. It's not a personal matter at all.

Discontent, restlessness, not wanting to be here is the normal human state. All that you're expressing is a normal human state of consciousness. But the only difference is that most people don't know that this is what's happening to them because it's normal.

But you can see it. You can see the impatience, the restlessness, the not wanting to be here, the wanting to be in some future moment, tonight, tomorrow. But when you get there, tonight or tomorrow, where do you want to be in the next one?

That's, so to watch the madness, it's arising in you and it's not personal. Madness is not personal, it's normal. It's human, normal human consciousness.

I always want to be in the next moment. And watch that and then, okay, there it is. When you see, the moment you see it, something else is already arising.

That which sees your state of consciousness, to recognize your state of consciousness.

Already the seeing frees you. You're no longer totally it.

See, so any movement in yourself, it may be semi-physical at this very moment. Anxiety, restlessness, or any emotion that runs through you that's maybe connected to a memory or to some kind of anticipation of what is going to happen. A life situation that you're thinking about and you're experiencing emotions that go with those thoughts.

You see that. You see that you've been trapped almost all your life in that stream of thought. And if nothing happens, this is how you will die.

To the end of your life, discontent, restless, looking for the next moment. That is the human condition. So it's seeing it, mm, okay, all right.

And feeling it. And not saying, I should not be feeling this. I really should be beyond the human condition by now.

Doesn't work. There's the human condition. There's you feel what you feel at this moment.

Certain thought streams are going through your head. What can you do except to see it? And it is part of the is-ness of this moment.

What can you do? It is as it is. You bring acceptance to the agitation perhaps that you feel.

Okay, so something else arises the moment you accept this moment. Inner or outer level, doesn't matter. Presence arises.

Everyone here has a life situation, as I sometimes describe it. A past and a future, perhaps. There's no certainty about that.

But probably, you have a future. Certainly, you have a past. Usually, your entire attention is absorbed by that.

This creates a conceptualized self. And this is what walks with you wherever you go. Now, is that here, sitting here?

Are you sitting here with the burden of your life situation, remembering the problems that you had yesterday and what somebody did or didn't do or situation, anticipating the problems of tomorrow, having the story we talked about yesterday, the story of me, how is it going to unfold? It's very problematic. Take, this is the life situation, not being able to get out of this into now, the only place where a new factor can come in, the only place where true intelligence can actually change your life situation and not make it into a continuous repetition of the past.

That's all the future. If there's no, if the unconditioned does not arise, your future is a

continuation of past on the surface, big changes may happen. You might go to a different country, meet a different partner, different financial situation, but certain patterns will be there, repeat themselves.

Unless you find the space of freedom. So it's, again, life situation and roles, they are all connected. You play certain roles as part of your life situation.

Learn to step out, even while you honor the situation, never be totally in it. Is that possible? Yes, it's possible for you now.

To have, you have the choice. Choice? Who has a choice?

You. Who am I? Consciousness.

There's nothing but consciousness. Consciousness is choosing presence. Consciousness is choosing to step out of identification with roles and forms and thoughts.

It's a cosmic transformation. It looks like something changing on the human level, but it's only a tiny aspect of that. The arising, the change in planetary consciousness.

So all I have to teach here, and it's not really teaching, there's only one thing, and it's a, from one perspective, it's a tiny shift to step out of the stream of thinking, to accept this now, to use a portal that can take you into the dimension of no thought, a tiny shift, and yet a very radical transformation too. That's all. There's nothing else here that you need to be shown, and you can only be shown this because it's arising in you already.

Stepping out of that stream, allowing the alertness to arise. The alertness that the Zen master pointed to when he was asked to explain the meaning of Zen, and he became quite famous as a master because he never gave any explanations, nor did he hit people. All he ever did when asked to explain the meaning of Zen was to raise his finger, and he would look at you in the state of absolute presence.

No thought, just pure conscious awareness. That's the essence of Zen or any other teaching, that state of consciousness. Not to exist in that for the rest of your life, but that's the essence of your being, and the rest is a little out of form, including roles that you play with.

But not lost in your life situation, lost in the story of me, thinking it matters so much what happens to me, because you only know yourself as the form, as the story, as the situation. Then it matters so much. But when you know yourself being beyond the form of your life, there's an essence knowing, then what happens or doesn't happen to you is relatively important, but not absolutely important.

Relatively, yes. Do I have \$10 in the bank or \$10 million? There's a relative difference.

It will make some difference to your life situation, whether you have \$10 in the bank or

\$10 million. It is relatively important. It is not absolutely important.

If you have 10 million now, two years from now, you may have 10 left, or you have 10 now, maybe you will have 10 million. Gain and loss in everybody's life. If you think it matters absolutely, it becomes part of your sense of self, and when you lose it, as you will, you suffer, you lose yourself.

So Jesus said there's only one thing that matters. You're worried about many things, he said to someone who was trying to get things done. You're worried and concerned about many things, he said to a woman called Martha, but only one thing matters absolutely.

Then everything else in your life is relative. It's honored, but you have some distance from it, a space around it. Nothing stays with you for that long.

You have a space around whatever happens. That is the space of stillness. That is the space of peace.

That is the space that comes as you enter that beautiful state that is the surrendered state of consciousness, allowing this moment to be. Space consciousness, one could say, arises. Everything else is object consciousness.

Thoughts, mind forms, emotions, sense perceptions, objects in your consciousness arise. In the unenlightened state, you identify with the objects in your consciousness, thoughts, and every object says, I matter, can give me your attention. Every thought says that.

Believe in me, I matter, I'm really important. Because a thought is a little, it's an energy form. It's a little being, temporary being.

It has a little existence as an energy field, and the entity wants to grow. It says, look at me, I'm very important. Objects in consciousness arise, and humans tend to identify with certain objects that arise and think, that's me, me, me, and none of it is you, because it's not going to last.

A possession is an object in consciousness. The BMW is an object in consciousness. The big house is an object in consciousness, or the belief that I have failed, I'm unemployed, and poor is another object in consciousness, another mind image.

And they arise continuously, knowing yourself not to be an object in consciousness, but simply you know yourself as consciousness. The objects are relatively important. Positions that you attain, they come, they go.

Worldly recognition comes, goes, or never comes. Money comes, goes. Whatever you do, move, place here to there, movement, people in your life come, go.

Situations, conditions, states of health come, go. Objects, sense perceptions arise. Objects in consciousness.

And knowing yourself as the underlying stillness. That is the essence of your being. That is this place of freedom from conditioning.

That's all you can learn here in these three hours to access in yourself that dimension. Not through a technique, some technique may work, but techniques tend to give you time to get there. Or you, as the practitioner of a technique, give it time.

Even if the technique is designed to take time away from you, you, the practitioner, may need to become, to achieve something through the technique, another mind object. There are beautiful, simple techniques like watching your breath. When you watch your breath, you have to be very present and you cannot think while you watch your breath.

Breath moves in and out of the body. And if you truly feel the breath moving in and out of the body, you cannot think. The moment you think, you've lost awareness of the breath.

And then you're not present anymore. And then from watching the breath, you can easily sense there's the breath and there's the watcher, the field of awareness. I am that.

I am that. I am that is the fundamental identity beyond form, the essential I am-ness that is pointed to in the Old Testament when God talks of him, her, itself as I am that I am. I am no longer this or that.

I am prior to, before the arising of an object in consciousness as this or that. Those are the forms, temporary forms, temporary roles. So the presence is the realization of the essence of your identity, which in the unenlightened state gets mixed up with mental forms and stories and roles.

So there is an essence in your story and in your role that is the truth, but it gets totally mixed up with the form. Because everybody feels there is something incredibly precious to my being, and that is me. I don't want to lose that.

Everybody feels there's something very valuable and precious in here that gets totally mixed up with the story that people are telling yourself about who they are, and then to realize that that is the I am presence that has nothing to do, ultimately, with your life situation. It can be realized at any point in your life situation. You may be in prison or live in a palace.

You may sit on a bicycle or ride in a Rolls Royce. At any stage or state in your life situation, can that be realized? In good weather or in bad weather, it can be realized.

But by the way, it's more likely to be realized in bad weather, and of course, that comes soon enough in everybody's life. It's more likely to be realized through loss because an object is removed from your consciousness. A form is removed from your consciousness that you had identified with as yourself.

What is left when you lose someone close to you dies? You lose your possessions. You lose your status in society.

You lose the role that you have been playing. All of us will experience or have already experienced that you cannot go through life without experiencing, sooner or later, fundamental loss, also gain. But what you gain, you lose again.

And loss has been, for quite a few people, the awakener. Why? Why not, when something good happens and you get added something, why didn't you awaken then?

Because loss means an object dissolves in your consciousness that you had identified with as me, a thought form. It could be as simple as you arriving at the place where you parked your expensive new car and it's gone, relatively insignificant event. But for some people, if your sense of self is in that, it's very painful.

There's an empty space where there was your car. And then, if you don't start screaming and shouting and trying to, and you stay with that for a moment, you stay with that moment because you have learned to face the now as it is. And what you face in that moment of loss is an empty space.

And if that empty space is faced, the thought form that was linked to that outer form, car, me, big, better than, stronger than, more powerful than, that thought form has nothing to link itself into anymore. There's only an empty space. And at that moment, the thought form also dissolves when you face totally the space that is there when you lose something.

And that means there is a little hole in this stream of mental images and mental noise through loss. And when that hole appears, the opening, what comes through that opening is unconditioned consciousness. If we used slightly religious language, we could say it's whenever some kind of death happens, because it is always a form of death.

If a form dissolves, the dissolving of a form is death. So even your disappearing big car is a little death. And whenever death is faced totally, there is an opening.

The form is gone, there's just a hole there. And you face this moment as it is. Then what comes through that hole, one could say the formless one life is shining through that.

That. One could even say God comes through because every form obscures God. Let's just take it as a poetic statement.

Every form obscures God. Whenever a form disappears, that which is beyond form, the one life that manifests as form, but is beyond form, suddenly shines through, the formless, the divine, the light from God, doesn't matter what you call it, the unconditioned consciousness. And it shines through.

The moment it's there, it's so much peace in that, such aliveness in that, and yes, sacredness, joy also. And that is the essence of who you are. Traditionally, most human beings have found it through loss, through death.

Then teachings came, and the teaching points to the possibility of letting go your identification with those forms, so that the opening that otherwise is only caused by some disaster in your life, some form of death in your life, some great loss in your life, the opening that otherwise can only occur in the face of that, when you are ready to hear the truth that is contained in a spiritual teaching, it happens without the need for further disaster in your life. The opening is here now, as you enter the state of yes to now, allow the stillness to arise instead of fighting against it.

The little me entity has been fighting against stillness all its life. No, no, don't stop, don't listen. Fighting against the now all its life.

We talked about it yesterday, of making the now into an enemy, and all your life trying to resist it and get away from it. So the opening arises without the need for further disaster. But probably only because you've had enough disaster already.

In other words, you have experienced loss, otherwise you wouldn't be here. So there's already, the hole has already appeared, maybe more than one in the fabric of your existence. And that is good.

But here we choose death and then realize nothing important really dies. Because we choose, or as the expression goes in the holy book, die before you die. Sometimes translated as find death before death finds you.

And this is what's happening here. And once that's happened, you don't need disaster anymore. Unless you do, then you'll get it.

Disaster means something big is taken away from you. Death in one form or another comes into your life. And then there's the potential in every death, in every loss, there's a potential for realization.

The opening is there if you face it. If you run away from it, the potential is lost again. So there are many people in this world who have experienced great loss, but no inner change has happened.

Which means the potential, the opening immediately got obscured again. The moment was never faced. So the ultimate, the true death is simply the facing, the complete facing of this moment.

And more attention to this than to your life situation. This is amazing. This now is more important than your life situation with its problematic story.

It always is more important and is the only place where true change can happen, even in your life situation. So stepping out of that heavy conceptualized me past, future, into this. Your attention moves out of the forms into this.

You give enough attention, of course, to make little plans to do this and that, no problem there. You deal with everything that needs to be dealt with, but mainly you deal with what you can and must deal with at this moment. You honor this completely.

That means your attention, your consciousness is moving out of being trapped in the mind forms and becoming alert stillness out of the prison of mind forms. And suddenly there is the alert stillness in which you are free of the burden of the problematic life situation and the conceptualized sense of self. And the amazing realization comes there is no problem here in this now.

There cannot be. No problem can survive in the space of now. All problem making is connected with identification with thought processes and a self derived from thought processes.

Is it real? Is any problem real in your life? You can only find it.

Is it real at this moment? Is it a challenge at this moment? Is action possible at this moment?

You face this completely. If no action is possible, there's simply a yes. With that arises space.

What I sometimes call space consciousness, which isn't consciousness of something. It's consciousness. Amazing, amazingly simple.

And amazingly profound. What is perhaps the most profound statement in the Bible is be still and know that I am God. That contains all the words which are ultimately all synonymous.

Be, be, being, still, know, knowing. There is deep knowing in that stillness. Great intelligence and be still.

Be still, know that I am God the one. This statement contains the essence of all religions, of all teachings. And each word contains the power.

And each word is synonymous with each other word. Being, stillness, knowing, the I am, and God, they're all one. And so that, in a way, is the greatest mantra, if you can call it that.

And that was in the Bible, that is uttered by God, that statement, what does that mean? That statement is uttered by consciousness itself. The I am.

It's amazing that it should have found its way there because a lot of it is only relatively true. The great sage Ramana Maharshi, whom some of you may have heard about, who lived in India, passed away in around 1950. He taught mostly through stillness.

In other words, people would ask him a question and he would just look at you. In the state, of course, of stillness. Not thinking, what a silly fool you are to ask such a question, no.

He would just look in the field of stillness. And that was the teaching. But occasionally, out of that, words also came.

Once he was asked, how can we know, one person asked him, whether we are making progress on the spiritual path because we might be deluding ourselves. And he said, that's very simple. The degree of absence of thoughts is the criterion for progress on the spiritual path.

Oh, the degree, that means the extent to which thoughts no longer occur, which means the extent of inner stillness is the degree of progress on the spiritual path. Oh. And one or two minds in this room may be saying right now, oh my God, then I haven't made any progress because my mind is so noisy.

And then you watch that thought and allow it to be. And there's the arising of stillness around the thought. It's so simple.

And then stillness is there as an undercurrent in your life, even while you're in the shop. How much is that? Okay, I'll take it, money, thank you.

And again, it's to do with not being totally drawn into the function of that moment, the role of that moment. Customer, shopkeeper, who wants something from each other, who make the other person into a means to an end. And so there's a little gap as you hand over your money with a little field of aware, still presence.

Three seconds, four seconds, don't need to just, you hand over. You're waiting for change. Then you get a few seconds.

It seems insignificant from the point of view of mind, but you have freed yourself and the other person from the delusion of being the temporary form, the temporary role that we are playing. And you continue in your role as customer, but it's only like something you've put on. You're not it.

Any situation, you are the bringer of space, stillness into that situation. And then words come, action happens too. And even while the words are being spoken, there can be stillness.

If you should lose yourself in the words, which is very easy to do, the moment you open

your mouth, mind draws in your attention and you get drawn into identification with the quickly arising thought forms. So it's very easy to completely lose yourself in that again. And then only afterwards you suddenly notice you got totally lost again in that.

And then you say, oh, okay, I lost the now. And then you re-enter the now, it is. How do you re-enter the now?

Presence simply arises. Or you could feel the sense the inner body becomes an anchor, look at this moment and say, oh, that's it is how it is. Say yes to that, that's the beginning of stillness.

Or bring complete attention to sense perceptions, especially in nature and alertness. And that alertness is still. So as you look at that tree, you're aware of two things.

The tree, the form, that, and the stillness in which the perception happens, which is the awareness in which it happens, which is consciousness, which is the I am. I'm ringing this bell. As I ring this bell, the sound arises in the field of now, in the field of awareness.

And as you listen, you can be aware not only of the sound, although to be aware of the sound, especially as it dies down, you need to be alert to follow the sound with your attention. It requires a certain alertness, especially as the sound begins to disappear. When it's disappeared, what remains is an empty space of awareness.

The disappearing sound is a form of death because it comes to an end. And that is always when the form meets the formless. It's a beautiful moment of sacredness.

So listen again and be aware not only of the sound, but also, one could say, of yourself as the field of presence in which the sound happens. Still, very still, there is an incredible joy and aliveness in knowing yourself as consciousness itself, whether something is happening or not happening or what is happening in that field that you are, doesn't really matter anymore that much. And if it doesn't matter that much anymore, it improves greatly what's happening.

This is why Ramana Maharshi, the teacher I mentioned just now, he said, your true nature is happiness. I wouldn't use that word. I would say your true nature is joy.

It is there when you know yourself as the underlying awareness, not as something in the awareness, as awareness. And that awareness knows itself. It is, one could say, it is awareness of awareness.

It senses itself. It knows itself. I am.

I am. I am life before it becomes something. And I am everywhere.

Of course you are. You don't need to be. I am in the flower, manifesting as the flower, the same presence, the same consciousness manifesting as that.

So you recognize yourself, this essence of I am, when you look at a tree or plant or flower. Oh, it's me. You don't tell yourself that.

You sense that. And another human being, you look into the eyes of the bank manager. And the same I am presence is there underneath the role of bank manager.

And you look at him and recognize yourself. And in that moment of recognition, you love him. Truly.

Because whatever you recognize as yourself, you love as yourself. And then the words come true that they tried to practice but couldn't. Love thy neighbor as thyself because thy neighbor is thyself.

Recognize thy neighbor as thyself. Then of course you love him or her. So in that self-recognition is the love for all life forms as yourself.

And then you can say with the teacher, some of you know J. Krishnamurti who taught for 50 years or so. In one of his talks, he suddenly stopped and said, do you want to know what my secret is?

And everybody said, yes, please. We've been waiting for that for 40 years. And he said, okay.

Here it is. I don't mind what happens. Oh, I don't mind what happens.

That was his secret. Now perhaps, I don't know how many of his listeners understood that, but now perhaps we can see what it is that he meant. What happens is a form that arises, comes and goes.

When you know yourself as the stillness, as the I am presence, what happens is allowed to happen. That's why life gets so much better. All the things that you thought you needed will be added unto you.

A statement from the teaching of Jesus, which simply means, the things that you needed, I need that. It tends to happen that life brings them to you when you no longer need them. And then at some point, of course, life takes it away again.

That's okay. We'll take a little break. Perhaps 15 minutes of clock time.

Welcome. I should say welcome in many languages. So many nationalities here.

So some of you have come a long way, traveled a long distance to be with yourself. And sometimes that's how it works. To be with yourself, I don't mean the self that is such a burden to carry.

You may be carrying that also, but that's not why you've come here. but something

deeper than the story or the conceptual self in the head that needs and wants something. Of course, that's also come with you here.

The self that needs or wants something. And it may be expecting to get it here, to add something to itself, but that's not how it works. So I sometimes use the expression portals, openings into yourself, a new state of consciousness, one could say, unconditioned.

And portals are here all the time. And one could consider our entire retreat as a portal into that state of consciousness that we may call presence. So the retreat is not here to add anything to you.

One could almost say it's here to remove something. Yeah, but not even that. To show something that's already there.

And the teaching, to use that word, it's not really any teaching. The totality of this weekend, long weekend is the teaching. The words are not that important.

While we sit here in this beautiful space, you may be a little tightly packed in the back. Maybe tomorrow we can move forward a little bit more. But while we sit in this beautiful space, always remember, and I will keep reminding you so that you don't get attached only to the words, to pay attention to this.

This is one important portal that is here. To pay attention to the silent space that is here. It's here in this room.

So while we sit here, there's always a dimension of silence or silent space. And all that's required of you for it to become a portal is to pay attention to it. It does not mean that you cannot pay attention to the words.

You listen, the words are there, they go in. But as you listen, you also listen to the silence. And the mind, the thinking mind might say, this doesn't make sense because listening to the silence, there's nothing to listen to.

All that's required is simply to acknowledge, to pay attention, to notice the silence. To the thinking mind, that is not a significant event. It is a non-event.

It is a non-happening. It is completely uninteresting, has no fascination whatsoever, and adds nothing to who you are. That's why the mind-made self, the heavy self that you carry with you is not interested in it and can't even do that.

In other words, you cannot listen to silence through thought. The moment you notice the silent space, the stream of thinking ceases and you haven't lost consciousness. That's why we are here.

That is one portal that is opening up. There's only one thing here to learn, and it's not

even learning, because learning would imply that you need to absorb something new. There's only one thing here to discover.

And in many of you, probably most of you, that has already emerged, which I sometimes call the unconditioned consciousness, the state of presence, or more recently, I've been calling it space consciousness, as opposed to object consciousness. Most humans in this world know only object consciousness and are identified with object consciousness react. Object consciousness is anything that takes on form.

Thought is a form, a thought form, an object in consciousness. Every sense perception is an object in consciousness. Object consciousness, the words that you hear are object consciousness forms.

The silent space has no form, can't grasp it. Space consciousness, that dimension of depth or stillness that is already in you. And in many, I know that that has already emerged, although it may get obscured from time to time again by total absorption in object consciousness, thought, reactions, me, and you yourself become an object to yourself, a mind made me with its story.

You have made yourself into an object in consciousness, an uneasy entity. And that uneasy entity is also here. The reason why you are here is that something else has emerged, which one could call a new consciousness on this planet because it's been so rare until even now, it's still rare, but until recently, it's been so rare for that dimension to be realized in a human being.

And suddenly now, many people are beginning to realize it. It's still rare, relatively speaking, relative to the population on the planet, but in more humans, it is emerging already. And you may not even know that this is why you've come here.

But the self, the object consciousness, me, has also traveled here, and it may have its own agenda here. It wants something because it is never enough, never complete, never fulfilled for except short intervals between two wantings or two fears and two not enoughs. So that self, what is traditionally called the self in Buddhism, that is called the self has come with you.

And of course, wherever you go, it will travel with you also. And it won't leave you alone for too long. And it's back, I'm still here.

And that is that part in you that after a little while here, maybe tomorrow afternoon, will already begin to feel restless because not enough is being added to it here. And it will start thinking, how much longer have I got here? I have to stay another two days.

And then it'll project itself to the third day when you're going to leave, because that is then becomes the next significant event. Whereas this retreat to that self is a non-event. So it will project itself away because it always wants to be in the next moment, not in

this one that is a characteristic of object consciousness of the self.

So it won't be happy with this for long. So that it's good to know that that also is there in you and it does other things. It's not happy with what is for very long.

And it likes to complain and react. And I don't mean complain in saying, you're stepping on my foot, please remove your foot from my foot. That's a simple statement.

You can do something to alleviate this, please do it. That's not a complaint. I mean, the mind pattern of inner and sometimes outer complaining, which is to do with a deep seated pattern in the mind made self that is the reactive.

And although these are beautiful surroundings, some of it's perhaps hard to find a more beautiful spot on the planet, yes. And yet the self will easily find things to be unhappy about because we live in the world of forms. It's in the nature of the world of form that it is not totally satisfying.

Things go wrong in it. And the self loves that fact because then it can complain. And here there are many people in a relatively small space, plenty of opportunity to complain about other people, maybe in the head only or whatever conditions are not quite right.

And in complaining, which is a deep seated pattern, reacting, complaining of the deep seated pattern of the mind made self, the conditioned entity, in complaining and reacting, it momentarily strengthens its sense of self because when you complain, you are right and somebody else is wrong. And so it's unconscious. It is an unconscious attempt to strengthen one's sense of me, of self, which is never quite enough.

So you need to strengthen it somehow. So you cut here, there may not be much else left for it than to feel unhappy about something and then focus on that. Could happen.

The pain body may come in and add to it. We're having a full moon on Saturday, which sometimes triggers pain bodies. So just to know that there's a dimension in you of depth, which has brought you here.

And there's the dimension, the shallowness of a mind made me that cooperated enough for you to be here. Okay, I'll go along with that. In quite a few people, it didn't allow them to come here.

At every retreat, there are people who at the last minute or a day before or a week or something, am I, should I go? There's no, what's the point? And after much agonizing, they cancel.

So something in them prevented them. This is quite normal. Maybe they'll come to the next one or they get other teachings or teachers, maybe talk just situations.

Everybody gets what they need. So sometimes it interferes enough, but with you, at

least it cooperated to allow you. And some of you hardly made it here because even a few days ago, you weren't quite sure whether you would actually go.

So to observe, I may be talking a little bit more about it tomorrow so that you recognize it clearly when it's there, because that's really all that's required for it to recognize the conditioned entity that until recently was your entire identity. And it's really enough to recognize it. Oh, there it is.

And of course, there is something deeper in you that's arising and opening up. And that has brought you here. Throughout, we are using the portals that are available to us here.

And one is silence, not only in this room, but also out in nature, which is the other teacher here. There are quite a few teachers this weekend. The beautiful nature that you're going to walk in, move in.

It's not only that all the beautiful things that you see, thousands of life forms, that's beautiful. There's also a vast sense of space or spaciousness and a silence that underlies it all. If you can listen to it first thing in the morning, you will hear the birds.

Beautiful sounds. They are objects in consciousness, perceptions, beautiful. And then notice, just as you do it here, the silence or the stillness out of which the sounds come.

And suddenly the sounds have greater depth to them. That depth is your own depth, ultimately. It's the depths of the universe.

And you can then listen to that beautiful sound, just the joy of life celebrating its own existence through these little forms. You can listen to that. And if simultaneously you are aware of space, you can listen to those sounds without any interference by thought.

And that is the arising of the new consciousness in which a vast intelligence operates, far greater than thought. And you haven't lost thought when you need it, it's there. So we use the portals that are here naturally and through a silent space here, no matter what you listen to in nature, no matter what you see, there's also a vast spaciousness, a harmonious whole that holds it all together, all these thousands of beautiful life forms.

You can be aware of that also. So the more you are aware of silence and space, the more that inner spaciousness, that inner stillness, they open up. And that is the depths of who you are beyond a little mind-made entity that also has its own level of existence.

It will continue, yes, but you are no longer captivated by it and thinking that that's all there is to you, this uneasy, fearful, needy entity. And then we are using here, well, other portals, of course, the main one you could say, and I'm sure you are familiar with that already, is now, every portal takes you into now, to be internally aligned with what is. That's a wonderful portal.

Whatever is, is as it is now. Allowing this moment to be, and this is our practice this weekend. Internally, to be aligned with this, to actually pay more attention to now than past and future.

You're not going to lose them. If during this weekend, you don't pay that much attention to past and future, or they will want to reassert themselves, return attention to now. Welcome now.

Whatever happens in now, some things, the little me might react, and then you notice, oh. And you realize it's important. Whatever is, you can't really argue with, because it already is.

Action then arises out of the surrendered state, not out of the resistant state. That's intelligent action, if action should be needed. So, whatever happens at this moment, and nothing can happen anywhere else except this moment.

Nothing ever happened that wasn't this moment. Nothing will ever happen that's not now. So whatever happens can only happen now, and is, one could say, although the little me doesn't like that, whatever happens is connected with the totality of all life, the totality of the universe.

Buddhists knew that 2,600 years ago already, the interconnectedness of all things. Modern physicists know that, that there are no separate events. There only seem to be separate events.

There's no such thing as a separate event or a separate entity. Everything is connected, interconnected to the totality, the web of the entire cosmos. Therefore, whatever happens is inevitable.

Otherwise, it would not be. It's connected to the fabric of the whole. So the is-ness of this moment could not be otherwise.

And the mind says, oh yes, it could. If he hadn't done that, this wouldn't have happened, but he did that. If I had acted differently, it wouldn't have happened, so it could be otherwise.

That's what the mind argues in that way, but the fact of the matter is it isn't otherwise. I can raise my arm, now it's raised, and the mind said, yeah, but you didn't have to do that. You could have not raised it, but now it's here.

Perhaps another universe has already branched off from this moment where I did not raise my arm. This is what physicists speculate about, that every moment, different universes come out of infinite possibilities. If we carry on talking about this, this will take us into philosophy.

The fact remains, this moment is as it is. It is. And then it changes, and again, it is as it is.

It may change through you because you accepted the is-ness which led to intelligent action because it's only now that the portal is open into true intelligence when you're not the reactive little entity that can't accept the is-ness and needs a future which is no more than a thought form, isn't it? Nobody has ever encountered the future except as a thought. Nobody has met it ever.

It only exists as a thought form. The past too only exists as a thought form. They seem so real.

Time, past and future seem so real. And you can say, yeah, they must be real because I'm getting old. I'm burning up in time, and I'm shriveling just like a fruit, a fresh fruit, and then it shrivels.

And then it's gone. Everything is being burned up in time. That's true on one level, it looks so real.

And then if you look, yes, but time, past, future, never here, never. Nobody's ever met them except as a thought. So it seems to do things to things.

And yet, if you look more closely, it doesn't even exist. No conclusions. Because then it becomes philosophy.

There's nothing wrong with philosophy, but not here. Just to see, even to see a paradox, to see the paradox of time and the timeless. So on this retreat, we use the portals of silent space here and in nature.

We use nature itself. We may talk about that tomorrow, which doesn't exist except as a thought form. We use the portal of now, which simply means our practice this weekend is to become friendly with now.

It doesn't sound important enough. I want ultimate realization. Well, just become friendly with now.

I want to attain the ultimate, just become friendly with now. Yes, but what about the ultimate? I want to add it to me.

And finally I'll be complete when I attain the ultimate in the future. So the entire retreat then can be considered as a portal, potential portal into that unconditioned consciousness, space consciousness, just words, pointers. It also helps, and here is another portal, to feel the inner body as you sit here, a certain aliveness in your energy field, simply to sense that the body is alive, a little bit anchors you in now.

And that I recommend when you go to bed here, because here you don't have television

to stimulate your mind or other things, radio. And if you're not staying here in the retreat place and you happen to have a television in your room, I would recommend that you don't switch it on this weekend or the radio. Are you going to miss something terribly important?

Probably not. When you listen to the news on Monday, it'll be the same. 20 years ago, it was the same.

Anyway, in the 20th century, similar things happened worse. So when you go to bed, lie there on your back, feel the energy field of the body, just notice it. It's not a big deal or complicated matter.

Simply start somewhere in the body, hands, feet. Oh, there's the hand. And then attention is there.

And then attention is in the general overall feeling of inner body that anchors you quite simply in now. Thoughts will slow down, may even stop if your attention is fully in the body. So instead of being immersed in some kind of thought stream, which is going to be about tomorrow or your return trip home, or the problems that are waiting for you when you get home, and it'll be saying, you should have stayed home, you have too many things to deal with, you shouldn't have come.

Those usual things that happen in mental noise. Then you start out of that into the aliveness of now, and you use the inner body as a portal. And it should wake up in the middle of the night, and the mind wants to start up again.

Me, my story, my problems. And then you notice, oh, let's go into the body. The mind will be saying, no, you can't.

There's no point. You can't, not now, you can't feel your body now. There's too much to think about, too restless.

Yes. And then you feel the body. Don't necessarily have to believe what the head tells you.

Not now, it says, not now, think, think. Every thought says, I matter, give me attention. It doesn't say that openly, but it wants, because it's a little energetic entity, and it wants more energy for itself.

So it wants to be taken very seriously. It says, I matter, give me more attention. And then you, usually it gets it.

It just pulls, okay, this matters. And then it leads to more proliferation of thought streams coming out of that one. And it's probably problematic.

And you're lying there in a nice bed, there is no problem except as thought forms. If

there were a true problem, it would be right in front of your eyes and you have to take action. Challenge, it would be a challenge that exists a lot in life.

But problem and accumulation of thought forms concerning future, sometimes past, has no actual existence except as a thought form. So it says, I matter, give me your attention. Off you go into a stream of thinking.

Can't sleep, just so much on my mind. And it burns up life energy. And then you wake up.

And there's the heaviness of me. I really can't face another day of this. So notice the tendency for mind to want to draw in all your attention.

Sometimes coupled with certain emotions, let's say me, then the emotion energizes the thought. And that becomes a person's sense of self. No space around it, just that, trapped in the form of me.

And then you suddenly notice, oh, the emotional turbulence and mental noise. They think, oh, okay. The noticing is the arising of something that is not conditioned, just to see it.

And with the seeing comes the possibility of stepping out. And then say, okay, I can actually feel my hand. Feel your hand, says thought.

Think about your problems. So you sense and you lie there. And you don't even want to go back to sleep because it's so beautiful to be anchored in your inner energy field.

And now, why go back to sleep? Enjoy your sleeplessness. Oh, it's great.

For a while, I went a little mad. I loved that state so much of not being able to sleep that I would drink two or three cups of strong coffee before going to bed, just so that I could enjoy that incredible sense of aliveness in the body. Not through the coffee.

The aliveness was there anyway, but I wanted to stay awake as long as possible. No need for that. And that reminds me, I would recommend that you don't, although we are in Italy, I'm sorry, that you don't indulge in alcohol this weekend.

You can indulge after. Because when presence is fully there, it doesn't matter anymore. But the arising presence can easily become obscured through a couple of drinks.

And then you go back into, hmm. So this is simply a recommendation. We are also going to spend some of this weekend in silence.

Again, a recommendation. There's no thought police or speech police. So I may recommend certain periods during the weekend when we are simply in silence, at least external silence.

Thank you. So it's good to notice, and just a few days here are enough to encounter many different states in yourself. Loving it here, oh, this is a great cruise.

And two hours later, hating it. Just notice. Notice something in you, as I said, wants to be here.

Something else doesn't really want to be here. It went along and might regret it now. And just notice that.

This room is open during the day. So you could come in any time also. Just if you want to sit, just sit.

Be still, listen to silence. Going out into nature, even, I recommend that even if you've come with a friend, every day to spend some time alone in nature also. So just walking, sitting, looking, listening.

We will talk more about that. So one recommendation then, we've been talking about thought is not to take any thought that arises this weekend. Too seriously.

Remember the thought says, I am serious, I matter. But it's not that serious. In this evolutionary leap that humanity is now taking, of which you, the form, is an important part.

You are that evolutionary leap of human consciousness. In that leap, we go beyond thought. We're leaving, we've gone through the whole huge evolutionary cycle of being totally identified with thought.

And now it's time to go beyond, because if we linger any longer in this state of consciousness, which has become dysfunctional, because it is the end of a cycle. If we linger any longer, humanity will not survive as a species. It will destroy itself and the planet.

The madness will simply increase as it's been doing throughout the 20th century. So we are stepping out of thought. Thought can still be used beautifully, creatively, but no longer have our self in it.

We are also going to spend certain periods of time, or rather no time, in stillness together. If there is a lot of interference through thought, simply use a portal, listen to silence. Feel the inner body, whatever.

Or simply say, okay, there's mental noise, that's how it is, what can I do? There it is, all right. The arising of that new consciousness, one aspect of it, one way of looking at it, very limited way, everything, every perspective is limited.

One aspect of that is, one can say, it is the arising of stillness from within, alive, vibrantly alive, but still. And out of that, sometimes dynamic action can flow. It is not a passive

state.

Our little opening ceremony, I almost forgot, awakening, the bell signifies awakening out of thought. Thank you. I will see you in the now at 10 o'clock, as you walk back to your room and throughout this weekend, and walk on the, what I call the razor's edge of now, one step at a time.

It's miraculous, that now, miraculous. Take off clothes, just that. Who cares about the story of me?

You can go back to it. This is where something new can come in, only through that opening.